

# Suicide – Data Brief

## Vermont Injury Prevention Program

### Background

Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in Vermont and the tenth leading cause of death in the United States in 2010. Risk factors for suicide include depression and other mental health diagnoses or a substance-abuse disorder, often in combination with a mental disorder. More than 90% of people who die by suicide have these risk factors. Other risk factors include: prior suicide attempt; firearms in the home; exposure to suicide behavior; and family history of suicide, mental disorders or substance abuse; and family violence.<sup>1</sup>

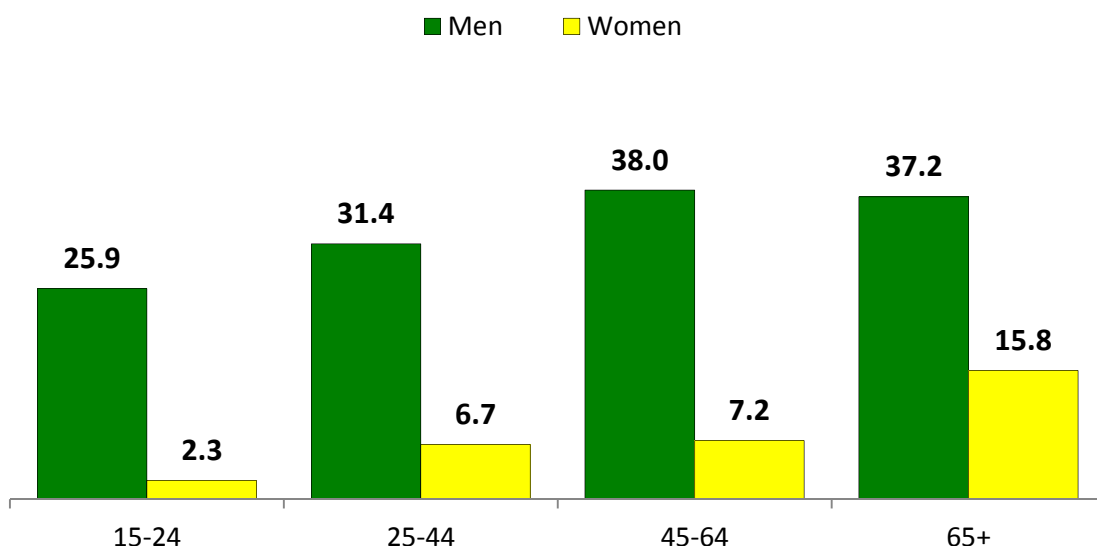
### Suicide Deaths

The Healthy Vermonters 2020 goal is to reduce suicide deaths from 15.7 per 100,000 in 2010 to 11.7 per 100,000 in 2020. Suicide accounted for the deaths of 108 Vermonters in 2010. From 2005 to 2010 the number of suicide deaths gradually increased from 75 to 108. The 2010 Vermont suicide rate was significantly higher than the U.S. death rate (15.7 versus 12.1 per 100,000).

Men are much more likely to die by suicide than women in Vermont. In 2010 there were four times as many male deaths (87) as female deaths (21). Correspondingly, Vermont's suicide rate was significantly higher among men (26.4 versus 5.8 per 100,000) than women. The suicide rate increased with age. For men, the rate peaked at 38.1 per 100,000 in the 45 to 64 age range. Among females, the suicide rate peaked in the 65 and older age group at 15.8 per 100,000.

Suicide rates were consistently and significantly higher among Vermont males than females, regardless of age; however, the gap narrows sharply among adults 65 and older. This is due to a sharp increase in the suicide rate among women 45 to 65 to those 65 and older compared with a fairly level rate among men.

**Suicide Death Rate per 100,000 in 2010**

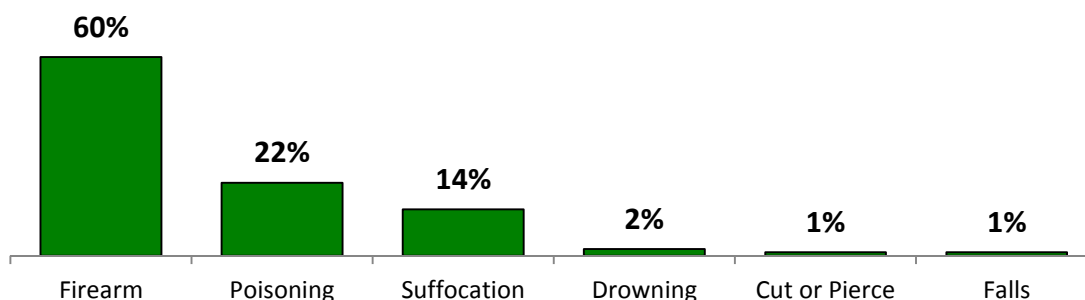


<sup>1</sup>Mann, J.J. (2002). *A Current Perspective of Suicide and Attempted Suicide*. Annals of Internal Medicine 136: 302-311.

### Leading Cause of Suicide Deaths

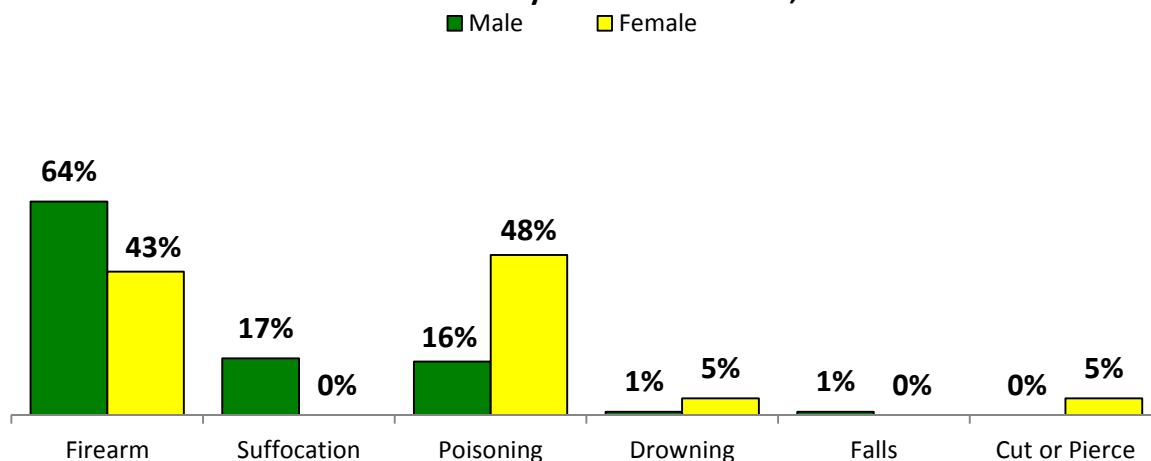
In 2010, the leading cause of suicide death in Vermont was firearms (60%). (Note, nearly all gun shot wound deaths in Vermont are a result of suicide, approximately 90% on average.) One in five suicides were due to poisoning; suffocation accounted for one in seven suicides. Very few suicides were the result of drowning, cutting or piercing, or falling.

**Cause of Suicide Deaths in 2010**



There are differences in the cause of suicide death by gender. The leading cause of suicide death was firearms for men and poisoning for women. Nearly two-thirds of suicides among men are completed with a firearm. Just less than one in five male suicides were a result of suffocation or poisoning. Whereas, among women, almost half completed suicide by poisoning, and just slightly fewer used a firearm.

**Suicide Deaths by Cause and Gender, 2010**



For more information on Injury Surveillance Data or suicide data, please contact Caroline Dawson, MS, MPA ([Caroline.Dawson@state.vt.us](mailto:Caroline.Dawson@state.vt.us); 802-865-7783).